

Legal Case Study Foley & Mansfield

File transfer problems.
Solved.

FOLEY & MANSFIELD
LLP

National law firm uses Accellion Secure File Transfer System to boost collaboration with clients and sees pay-off in higher customer satisfaction.

Background

Founded in 1989, Foley & Mansfield has succeeded in becoming one of the leading litigation law firms in the United States. The company serves clients ranging in size from multi-million dollar corporations to small businesses and their owners. With close to 300 employees in offices from coast to coast, the firm is large enough to ensure a depth and breadth of experience, yet personal enough to maintain its established reputation for individual client attention and responsiveness. The firm's reputation is based on its commitment to deliver results-oriented, innovative and cost-effective legal solutions to best meet its clients' needs.

As the firm grows both in size and number of locations the timely exchange of information and ideas among attorneys and clients is increasingly important. The Foley & Mansfield business plan calls for a transition to a paperless office in order to better serve the client base. This includes the implementation of document management systems, electronic billing, a human resources database, and the ability to securely electronically exchange all types of information between all users inside and outside of the firm.

Challenges

Initially the standard methods for sending electronic information were email attachments and FTP, both of which are problematic. Attempts to send large files via email usually failed because the intended recipients' email systems often block attachments with files over 10 Mb in size. Litigation Support and the IT department would have to intervene to help send the necessary files to the person waiting for them.

Foley & Mansfield gave their employees access to FTP and SFTP servers in order to transfer large files to colleagues outside the firm, but this method proved to be too cumbersome. Employees didn't like the highly technical interface to the file transfer service, which needed IT support to send files. The servers also required a significant amount of administration to segment areas for private files and remove information that was no longer needed.

In addition, file security was a concern with email and FTP. Neither method ensures the secure transport of files, leaving the firm at risk of exposure of private client information.

Foley & Mansfield began to rely on a manual process of saving files to a CD-ROM and shipping the CD overnight via a courier service. This process was quite costly in both dollars and time. Each of the firm's offices often sent 30 or 40 overnight packages every day, and the time to create the CDs and prepare the packages for shipping added up – as did the shipping charges. Moreover, the overnight time lag was a productivity killer.

With email, FTP and CDs all failing to meet Foley & Mansfield's burgeoning ad hoc file transfer needs, the company sought a better solution.

“There are many immediately noticeable benefits. Our entire firm benefits from providing higher levels of service to clients without incurring additional costs.”

Laura Danielson
Litigation Support Manager
Foley & Mansfield

Solution

Danielson worked with Adam Pugh, the firm's Director of Information Services and Technology, to develop a set of functional requirements for a solution that would allow employees to easily and securely send large files to internal and external recipients. “We agreed that the ideal technology solution must require minimal technical know-how to operate, protect the network from attacks and potential breaches, and provide key management capability such as security monitoring and process control,” says Danielson.

Pugh began investigating solutions that could meet all the requirements, and his research turned up one company name time and again: Accellion. He contacted the company to arrange for a demonstration of the Accellion secure file transfer system. “It was clear from the initial demonstration that Accellion's solution was the only one that met all of our requirements,” says Danielson.

The firm began a pilot rollout of the Accellion solution, implementing the file transfer service for 50 people at a cost of less than \$10,000.

"Feedback from both end users and IT administrators was positive from day one," says Danielson.

For Foley & Mansfield, one of the most attractive features of the Accellion solution is that authorized external users, clients and consultants can send files to the firm's employees without a hassle. Because the Accellion system uses a familiar email-like web interface, it doesn't place any infrastructure requirements (like a software agent) on the external user's computer. The law firm has customized this interface to give it the company's "brand" look and feel. Now, two-way ad hoc file transfer among employees and outside guests is available whenever needed and without asking IT for help.

The attorneys also like the automatic return receipt the Accellion system generates when a file is delivered. This feature eliminates the onerous task of calling recipients to make sure the right person received the information. The system administrator can run audit reports to track all file transfer activity, which helps the firm see specifically who is sending and receiving sensitive work documents. What's more, automatic file encryption increases security and eliminates the worry of compromised data.

The pilot program was so successful that Foley & Mansfield installed the Accellion solution for every employee throughout the company. Danielson cites numerous business benefits from having implemented this solution. "We estimate that we save 15 to 20 minutes per transaction for the Litigation Support team alone," she says. "This is a significant productivity boost for our department."

The companywide and extended real-time collaboration is even more important. Because they can now exchange files of any size at any time without IT intervention, the attorneys and their outside colleagues, clients and consultants can work together more effectively and efficiently. "Our entire firm benefits from providing higher levels of service to clients without incurring additional costs," proclaims Danielson.

BENEFITS

- Attorneys and clients are able to share information real-time, and without IT intervention, regardless of file size.
- Employee productivity is higher, as it has become easier to share information precisely when it is needed.
- The firm has lowered the cost of file sharing, even as the firm itself grows.

Specifications

Foley & Mansfield	
Deployed since	January 2006
# of Appliances	1
Location of Appliances	Minneapolis
# of Internal and External Users	250 Internal Unlimited External
LDAP/AD directory integration	Yes
Web Interface	Custom Branded
Email plug-in	No